

DEVELOPMENT DOCTRINES OF ROMANIA. IS THE SYNCHRONIST THESIS A DEVELOPMENT DOCTRINE? A VERY SHORT COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This is a short paper on some very important issues: the doctrinal aspects of development of a country like Romania. The type of the dominant doctrine makes the difference between underdevelopment – that is poverty of the majority, and development – that is, citizenship awareness into the road of welfare. The main aim is to underline some key differences between the Lovinescu's thesis of Synchronism and the rest, generally named under the umbrella of autochthonist doctrines – only briefly mentioned. It is short not because I do not have the means to develop on the subject matter but because there is the essence imperative: to understand in order to choose one direction or another. The essence is brief, like the time we are willing to invest in reading. Details, after we choose to be free as citizens with full self-awareness.

Keywords: synchronism, autochthonism, development, Romania.

1. MODERNIZATION IS NOT AN OPTION

The modernization of Romania – a vital process, not a choice, is a constitutive element of the survival of Romanian society, together with the emergence of the modern Romanian state, was not without its ups and downs. And the most important was Lovinescu's synchronistic paradigm, which emerged as a short-sighted theory of the heroic stage of modernization as Westernization in the 19th century that Romania should follow in the 20th century and beyond.

The synchronistic thesis is explained by the reactive mechanisms of the psyche of a particular social group, called by Toynbee the intelligentsia:

“a class of liaison agents who have learned the craft of the civilization to be adapted”⁹⁴.

Let us not forget, however, that in Toynbee, the intelligentsia is resentful, eternally oscillating between the people, which is “too backward”, and the “Western model” – which is always “too high”.

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⁹⁴ „o clasă de agenți de legătură care au învățat meșteșugul civilizației ce urmează să fie adaptată”, in Arnold J. Toynbee, *Studiu asupra Istoriei. Sinteză a volumelor I–VI de D.C. Somervell [A Study of History. A Synthesis of the I–VI volumes]*, Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 1997, p. 526.

On the other hand, the synchronistic thesis/theses – a set of statements that Pareto would integrate into the area of “non-logical” reasonings, with great deficiencies in their foundation. Probably Lovinescu’s non-logical reasoning is even of the IV degree – “he would not accept the objective purpose of the statement even if he knew it”⁹⁵ – in our case the need for organic development, from the bottom up, of Romanian society. But what does non-logical reasoning mean? Pareto refers to situations in which:

“(…) by reasoning logically rigorously we can obtain conclusions that are contradicted by reality, and there are cases when by reasoning logically defectively, through obvious sophisms, we can reach conclusions that are significantly closer to reality”⁹⁶.

But what does “logical” and “non-logical” mean? Professor Ilie Bădescu translated Pareto as follows:

“We call logical actions the operations that are logically united with their purpose, not only in relation to the subject who performs these operations, but also for those who have more extensive knowledge, that is, the actions having, subjectively and objectively, the meaning explained above. The others will be called non-logical, which does not mean that they are illogical”⁹⁷.

Their performance consists of the substitution of the natural reasoning of the processes of acculturation for the thesis of “progress” – an ideological tool of social pressure. From this point of view, Lovinescu’s theses, of the unreserved condemnation of the orthodox cultural path etc., are more related to the totemic mentality, of One imperative multiplied than to the mentality of the civilized Europe to which he aspires, focused on One as a synthesis, the Europe of the equality of peoples (Noica). It is significant that Noica’s work, which should represent for contemporaries less familiar with the early 20th century responses to synchronism the end of the career of Lovinescu’s theses, is called “The European Cultural Model” – exactly the subject of Lovinescu’s “History of Romanian Civilization”.

⁹⁵ „Le sujet n’accepterait pas le but objectif s’il le connaissait”, in Vilfredo Pareto, *Traité de Sociologie Generale [Treatise on General Sociology]*, Vol. I, Paris, Payot Publishing House, 1933, pp. 67–68.

⁹⁶ „raisonner avec une logique tout à fait rigoureuse conduit à des conclusions contredites par les faits, et que raisonner très défectueusement au point de vue logique, avec des sophismes évidents, peut conduire à des conclusions qui se rapprochent beaucoup plus de faits”, in Vilfredo Pareto, *Traité de Sociologie Generale [Treatise on General Sociology]*, Vol. II, Paris, Payot Publishing House, 1933, p. 1122.

⁹⁷ „Numim acțiuni logice operațiile care sunt logic unite cu scopul lor, nu numai în raport cu subiectul care îndeplinește aceste operații, ci și pentru cei ce au cunoștințe mai întinse, adică acțiunile având, subiectiv și obiectiv, sensul explicat mai sus. Celelalte vor fi numite non-logice, ceea ce nu înseamnă că ar fi ilogice”, in Ilie Bădescu, *Istoria sociologiei. Perioada marilor sisteme [History of sociology. The time of the Great Systems]*, Galați, Porto Franco Publishing House, 1994, p. 353.

2. SOME DISCREPANCIES

In short: the synchronist thesis, being reductionist, is in opposition to:

1. The social-psychological mechanisms of collective evolution, which he reduces to an individual process, and this seriously limited to imitation.
2. With the imperatives of natural growth, which presuppose organicity and cumulative growth.
3. The real problems of the community, which he considers the target of modernization, and not its beneficiary. Good is from the top down, and the huge costs, such as neo-serfdom, corruption, the superimposed blanket (pseudelites) are not seen or are considered “natural”.
4. Reducing the possibilities of modernization to a single path, the so-called “Westernization”, given that European culture and civilization have several models. Of course, there is a “European cultural model” identified by Noica in the book with the same title, but Lovinescu’s History of Romanian Civilization is far from such subtleties, being more a collection of ideological diatribes than explanatory refinements, much less anthropological and sociological.

However, Lovinescu’s theses are of actual importance because:

1. Lovinescu correctly observes modernity as a leveling factor of societies.
2. Their appropriation by our intelligentsia still marks us: today, the synchronist thesis has acquired Maoist valences, anyone who distances himself from them being considered an enemy of society, of the West, possibly a Putinist if not at least a “nationalist” – a brute with his head in a bag.
3. It represents a way of thinking about the world not only from the periphery to the center of the World system, but also from the center to the periphery: we are considering democratization by force, especially in relation to a single model, assumed by the institutions and elites of some great powers, which has generated strong local reactions, interminable wars, especially in the East. The best-known reaction is the emergence of BRICS and the beginning of the de-dollarization of this part of the world.
4. The theses are therefore part of the problem of today’s world order and must therefore be treated with all seriousness.

3. SINCRONISM VERSUS AUTOCHTONISM

I would not contrast synchronicity with protochronism:

“Synchronicity as such is a conception of Eugen Lovinescu, influenced by the French sociologist Gabriel Tarde, according to which the progress of humanity is based on the principle of imitation. More backward people imitate the advanced ones, until they synchronize. This is how Lovinescu applied this idea to Romanian culture. It can only reach the modern level of civilization by imitating the West. We do not combat this synchronicity, but we consider it insufficient, because we had advanced elements in our culture that of the West only later adapted. Now, these

priorities of ours, complements that complete the contribution of synchronicity, constitute what we have called Romanian protochronism. We say Romanian because we have researched so much, and we know better, and we cannot intervene in cultural spheres that we have not frequented. In essence, however, protochronism entails a claim in culture also of other small peoples from the center and especially from the east of Europe, as well as from other continents”⁹⁸.

nor is there any need to go that far, but I will “oppose” Lovinescu’s thesis with the “autochthonization of knowledge” – of the organic development of a culture, society, country:

The synchronistic thesis:	The imperative of autochthonization:
Eugen Lovinescu: “The process of unification through leveling has become the characteristic element of modern civilization. The principle can be fixed in the formula of the synchronicity of contemporary life, which, with all its apparent deviations, is reality itself, while the belief in the possibility of one’s own development against the spirit of the age is only the starting point of some passing disturbances” ⁹⁹ .	Nae Ionescu: “the influences between cultures are only apparent and that any culture does not lend to another more ‘advanced’ more than names for its own, original realities – the core itself, the essential and characteristic generating element being, by its very nature, non-transmissible, non-transformable and, therefore, non-assimilable” ¹⁰⁰ .

⁹⁸ „Sincronismul exclusiv este o concepție a lui Eugen Lovinescu, influențat de sociologul francez Gabriel Tarde, după care mersul înainte al omenirii se bazează pe principiul imitației. Popoarele mai înapoiate le imită pe cele avansate, până când se sincronizează cu ele. Așa a aplicat Lovinescu această idee la cultura românească. Ea nu poate atinge nivelul modern de civilizație decât imitând Occidentul. Noi nu combatem acest sincronism, însă îl considerăm insuficient, deoarece am avut cu anticipație în cultura noastră elemente pe care abia mai târziu le au adaptat occidentalii. Or aceste priorități ale noastre, complementele care întregesc contribuția sincronismului, constituie ceea ce am numit protocronismul românesc. Spunem românesc fiindcă atâta am cercetat, și cunoaștem mai bine, și nu putem interveni în sfere culturale pe care nu le-am frecventat. În fond, însă, protocronismul antrenează după sine o revendicare în cultură și a altor popoare mici din centru și mai ales din răsăritul Europei, precum și de prin alte continente”, in Edgar Papu, „Protocronism românesc în veacul XX (4)” [“Romanian Protocronism in the 20th Century (4)”], in *Românul. Magazin cultural [The Romanian. Cultural magazine]*, Year I, No. 9/1991.

⁹⁹ „(...) procesul de unificare prin nivelare a devenit elementul caracteristic al civilizației moderne. Principiul se poate fixa în formula sincronismului vieții contemporane, care, cu toate abaterile aparente, este realitatea însăși, pe când credința în putința unei dezvoltări proprii împotriva spiritului veacului nu e decât punctul de plecare al unor perturbări trecătoare”, in Eugen Lovinescu, *Istoria civilizației române moderne. Volumul III. Legile formației civilizației române [Volume III. The Laws of Romanian Civilization Formation]*, Bucharest, “Ancora” Publishing House, 1925, p. 189

¹⁰⁰ „influențele între culturi sunt numai aparente și că orice cultură nu împrumută altele mai «înaintate» decât nume pentru realități proprii, originare – sâmburele însuși, elementul esențial și caracteristic generator fiind, prin însăși natura lui, netransmisibil, netransformabil și, deci, neasimilabil”, in Nae Ionescu, „«Internaționala» sub glugă”, “‘The International’ under the hood”, in Nae Ionescu, *Teologia. Integrala publicisticii religioase [Theology. Complete religious publications]*, edited, with an introduction and notes by Dora Mezdrea, Sibiu, Deisis Publishing House, 2003, p. 402.

<p>“As the number of ‘inventions’ or ‘original ideas’ of a people is very limited, it can be said without exaggeration that imitation is the first form of originality, in the sense that, by adapting to the temperamental unity of the race, any imitation takes on a specific character in time. The originality of our civilization, as of the civilization of most peoples, does not lie, therefore, in ‘elaboration’, but in adaptation and processing.”¹⁰¹</p>	<p>Nichifor Crainic: “Doomed by its nature to sterility, mimicry is a solution for continuity in the normal development of national culture. However, no national culture can grow parasitically on the body of another culture. It is independent and worthy of being considered only to the extent that it symbolizes in superior forms the properties of the nation’s being”¹⁰²</p>
<p>“Historical conditions have orientalized us, however; (...) a softening Turkish influence, (...) to the point of a fatalistic conception of a passive life, traces of which can still be seen in the popular psyche...</p>	<p>Vasile Băncilă: “Any society that imitates cannot have a culture. But above all, it cannot have a philosophy. Philosophy springs from the application and fecundation of the Socratic dictum: ‘Know thyself!’”¹⁰³.</p>
<p>However, the most active ferment of orientalization was Orthodoxy. (...) Behind the Byzantine cross, Russian was hidden. Spiritually binding us to an obscurantist religion, stuck in typicons and formalism, Orthodoxy imposed on us a liturgical language and a foreign alphabet (...), without helping us to create a national culture and arts. (...)</p>	

¹⁰¹ „Cum numărul «invențiilor» sau al «ideilor originale» ale unui popor este foarte limitat, se poate spune fără exagerare că imitația e prima formă a originalității, în acel înțeles că, prin adaptare la unitatea temperamentală a rasei, orice imitație ia cu timpul un caracter specific. Originalitatea civilizației noastre ca și a civilizației celor mai multe popoare nu stă, așadar, în «elaborație», ci în adaptare și în prelucrare”, in Eugen Lovinescu, *quoted work*, 1925, p. 104.

¹⁰² „Osândit prin natura lui la sterilitate, mimetismul e o soluție de continuitate în dezvoltarea normală a culturii naționale. Nici o cultură națională însă nu poate crește parazitar pe trupul altei culturi. Ea e de sine stătătoare și vrednică să fie luată în seamă numai în măsura în care simbolizează în forme superioare proprietățile ființei neamului”, in Nichifor Crainic, *Nostalgia paradisului [Nostalgia for paradise]*, edition with introductory study by Dumitru Stăniloae, Iași, Moldova Publishing House, 1994, p. 22.

¹⁰³ „Orice societate care imită nu poate avea o cultură. Dar mai ales nu poate avea o filosofie. Filosofia izvorăște din aplicarea și fecundarea dictonului socratic: «Cunoaște-te pe tine însuși!»”, in Vasile Băncilă, „Autohtonizarea filosofiei” [“The indigenization of philosophy”], in *Gândirea [The thinking]*, Year VII, No. 11/1927, p. 275.

[N]othing Romanian emerged from the shadow and silence of our first holy places. (...) While in the West (...)”. ¹⁰⁴	
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The three doctrines – poporanism, peasantism, corporatism, were attempts at self-knowledge of society, in a Socratic sense, and therefore, autochthonist, mandatory crossing points for us, those of today, interested in the development of the Country. I am convinced that, in order to have a European construction in which we firmly believe, it is necessary to review these Romanian doctrines. We must come out from the amnesia of the great cultural projects to rediscover what the global elites have forgotten: applied love for man.

If the first two are more technical – related to the dysfunctions of socialism and the socio-economic techniques of uplifting the peasantry, especially the middle peasant class, through cooperation – highly developed in our country from the end of the 19th century until 1944 and labor ownership (as opposed to ‘lazy ownership’), the last one involves putting politics on a completely different basis: that of the corporate parliament, of political representation based on the contribution to the contribution to the national income of the professions.

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¹⁰⁴ „Condițiile istorice ne-au orientalizat însă; (...) o moleșitoare influență turcească, (...) până la concepția fatalistă a unei vieți pasive ale cărei urme se mai văd încă în psihea populară (...) Cel mai activ ferment al orientalizării a fost însă ortodoxismul. (...) În dosul crucii bizantine se ascundea rusul. Legându-ne, sufletește, de o religie obscurantistă, înțepenită în tipicuri și formalism, ortodoxismul ne-a impus o limbă liturgică și un alfabet străin (...), fără a ne ajuta la crearea unei culturi și arte naționale. (...) [N]imic românesc n-a ieșit din umbra și din liniștea primelor noastre locașuri sfinte. (...) Pe când în occident (...)”, in Eugen Lovinescu, *Istoria civilizației române moderne. Volumul I. Forțele revoluționare [The History of Modern Romanian Civilization. Volume I. Revolutionary Forces]*, Bucharest, “Ancora” Publishing House, 1924, pp. 8–12.

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